
City of Minneapolis 2014 Digital Equity Program

*Financial Stabilization, Employment & Work Readiness
Training, and College Success with Technology Access*

Program Summary Outcomes, Successes and Lessons Learned

North Minneapolis Programs Summary – October 2015

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Program Overview

The 2012 – 2013 City of Minneapolis Digital Equity pilot program—which included 10 families—was developed in May 2013 and concluded on August 2014. In November 2012, Unisys Corporation donated \$6,400 to PCs for People to provide computers with Internet access to a new group of 40 Minneapolis households as an expansion of the Digital Equity Program. The program is intended to bridge the digital divide and address the racial employment gap in Minneapolis by integrating digital literacy training and desktop computers with six months of Internet access at home.



The City of Minneapolis partnered with Build Wealth Minnesota, Pillsbury United Communities-Waite House, Little Earth of United Tribes, the State of Minnesota WorkForce Center (North Minneapolis), and the Digital Divide Documentary Empowerment Project (DDDEP) to connect with residents and supplement existing programs. Overall, most of the participants expressed the great impact of having a computer with internet in their home and feeling comfortable enough to use it for their various goals.



Participant Feedback

“There’s a big cavern like the Grand Canyon called the digital divide and it’s between ‘those who have’ and ‘those who have not.’

We need to build more bridges and the more who can cross over, the better.”
-Steve

“Internet service incredibly slow, particularly in dense areas like the Camden neighborhood” - Jeweleen

“This program has helped me in so many ways. I used to be so scared to do anything on the computer and now I’m very confident to be online with the rest of the world” - Diane

“We want just a class who’s a family. Real community.”
-Percy

Now I have prior experience that will help me to excel in my classes and in the actual career.

-Youth Production Intern

Program Components

Eligibility

- Live in Minneapolis
- Don't have computer/Internet at home
- Commitment to complete computer training classes

Access

- Computers and technical support from PCs for People
- 6 Months of internet service from PCs for People

Training

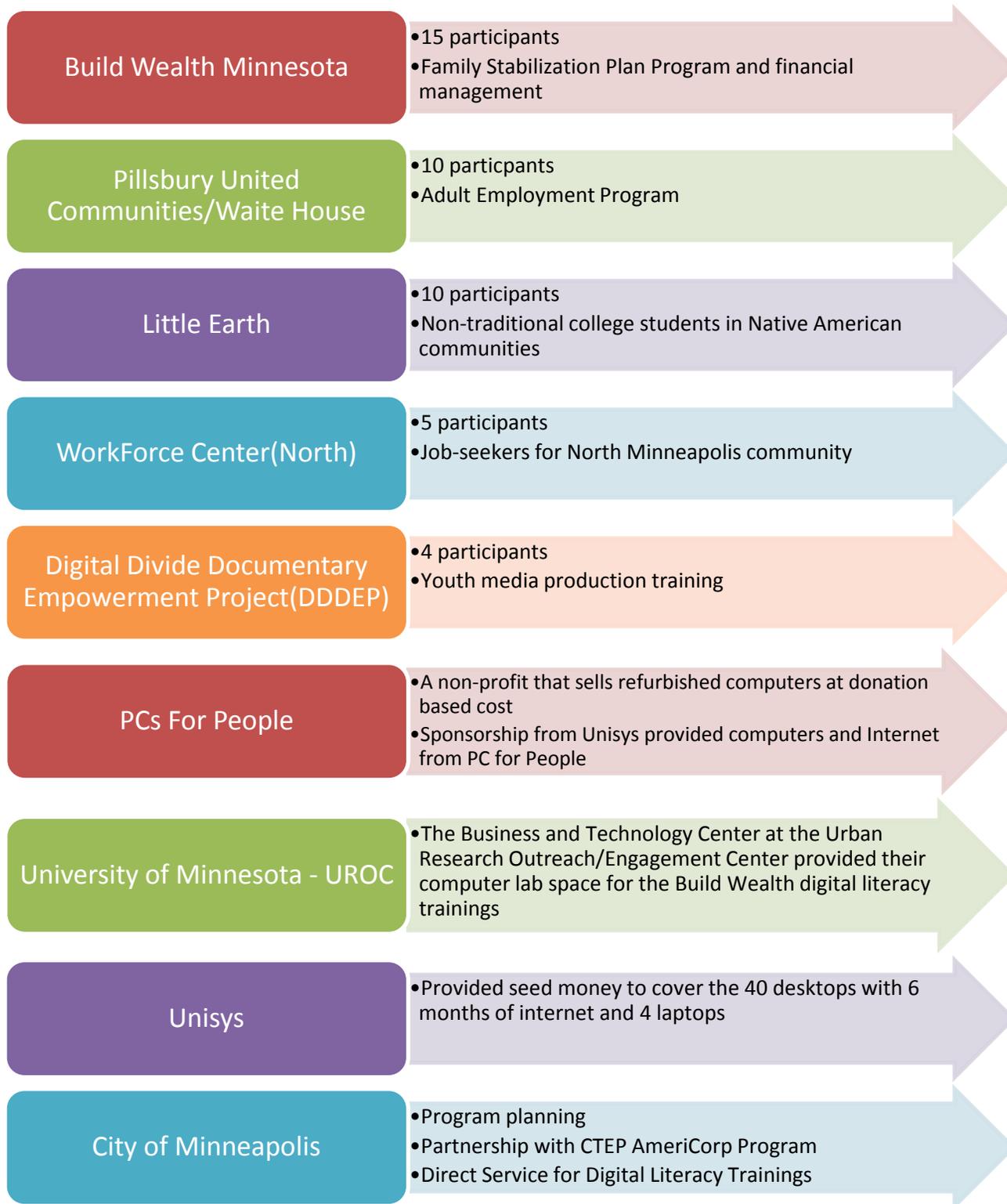
- Digital literacy skills classes and Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments provided by CTEP Americorps Member
- Employment tools provided by the Minnesota WorkForce Center-North Minneapolis

Supplemental

- The Digital Equity Program was supplemental to existing programs varied by each different partner organization



Digital Equity Partner Organizations





Digital Equity Program

Build Wealth Minnesota



Program Overview

The program is intended to bridge the digital divide and address the racial employment gap in Minneapolis by integrating digital literacy training and desktop computers with six months of Internet access at home with financial literacy training through Build Wealth Minnesota's Family Stabilization Plan. The Family Stabilization Plan program is a comprehensive financial education and counseling program that provides participants with a combination of classroom training, financial coaching, and one-on-one case management.

The Build Wealth Family Stabilization Plan includes the following financial management training and support components:

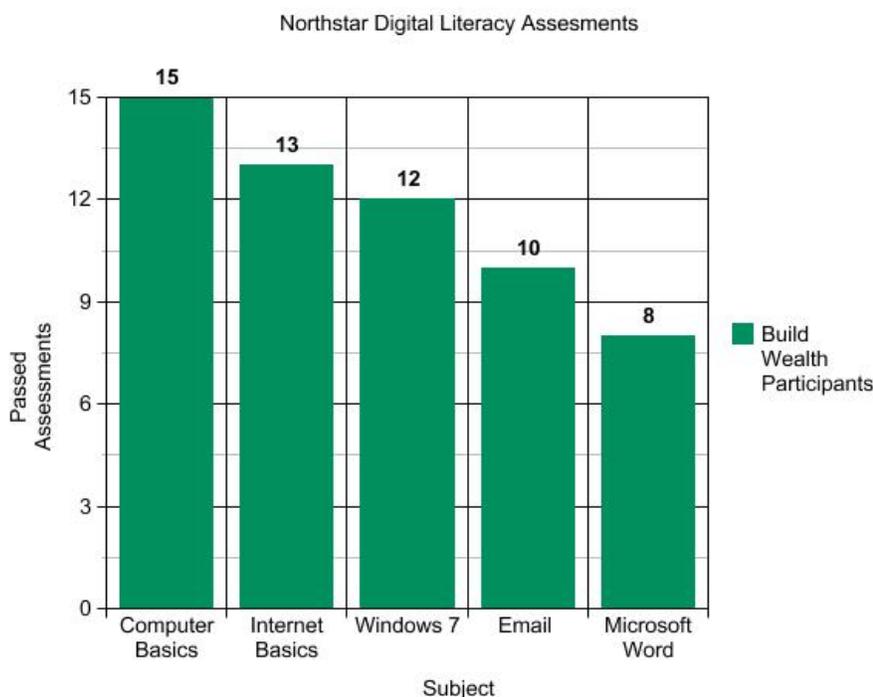
- 12 weeks of financial education covering 36 hours of training.
- Each family creates an action plan with their coach to document their commitments to specific program benchmarks and personal development goals.
- One-on-one case management: at each coaching session, participants review their goals and progress in the following areas: Housing, employment, salary, education, credit, savings, budgeting, and transportation.
- Online Budgeting System: Families create a budget which they can track online. They reconcile their budget monthly against their actual expenditures over several months. This process helps them evaluate and maintain effective spending patterns to meet their goals.

Timeline

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Program Planning and Implementation | December 2013- September 2014 |
| Welcome- Program kick-off with Families | March 1, 2014 |
| Digital Literacy Training and Northstar Assessments | March 3- April 7 |
| Computer/Internet Distribution with Maintenance Training | March 17 |
| Midpoint Check in | June 7 |
| Program wrap-up and Celebration | September 6 |
| Financial Management and Family Stabilization Program | January 2014-December 2014 |

Digital Literacy: During March 3- April 7, classes were held at UROC (University of Minnesota building in North Minneapolis) for the 15 Build Wealth Digital Equity Participants. The classes included: Computer Basics, Internet Basics, Windows 7, Email, Microsoft Word, and Computer Maintenance and Safety. At the end of each session, the participants took a proctored Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. The classes were managed and instructed by the City of Minneapolis-IT CTEP AmeriCorps member, Adja Gildersleve.

Measures and Outcomes



Classroom Evaluation:



Most of the participants expressed that the quality of the material was valuable. Some addressed that the material was too easy. The class consisted participants that ranged in various levels so it was hard to meet everyone's needs.

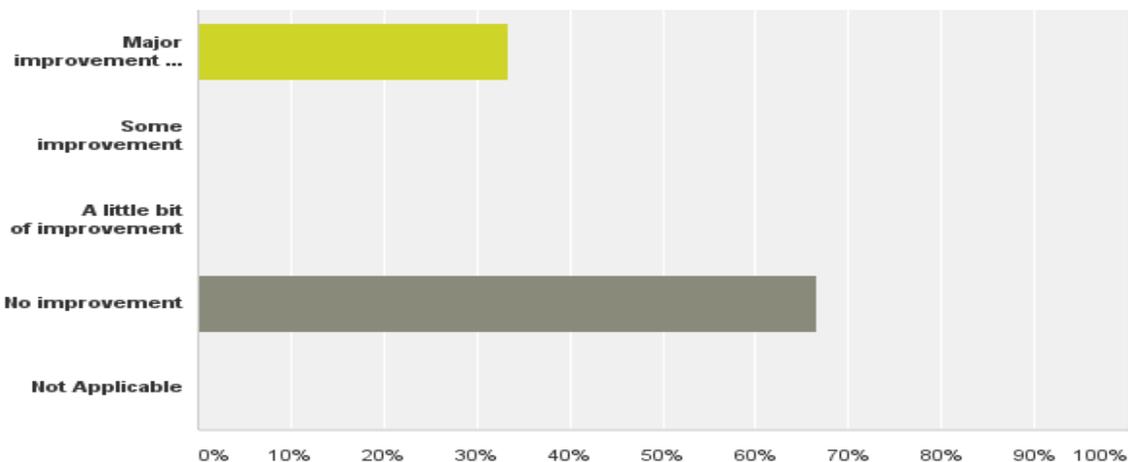
The interest level was ranked medium among the participants. The classes were focused on the technical skills. Participants gave feedback to add more examples regarding employment and financial literacy.

Every class was held in the UROC BTECH lab. The participants appreciated that the classes were located in North Minneapolis because many of them live in that region. They also expressed that the computer lab was very accommodating.

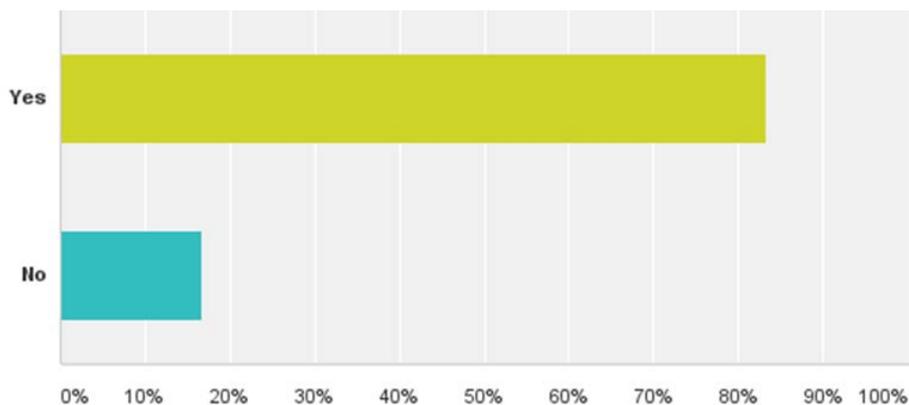
All of the participants highly ranked the instructor. It was expressed that Adja created a safe environment and was engaging. They expressed that it was important to have an instructor that was of color and that could build relationships.

Six out of the fifteen participants completed the online year-end survey in July-August 2014

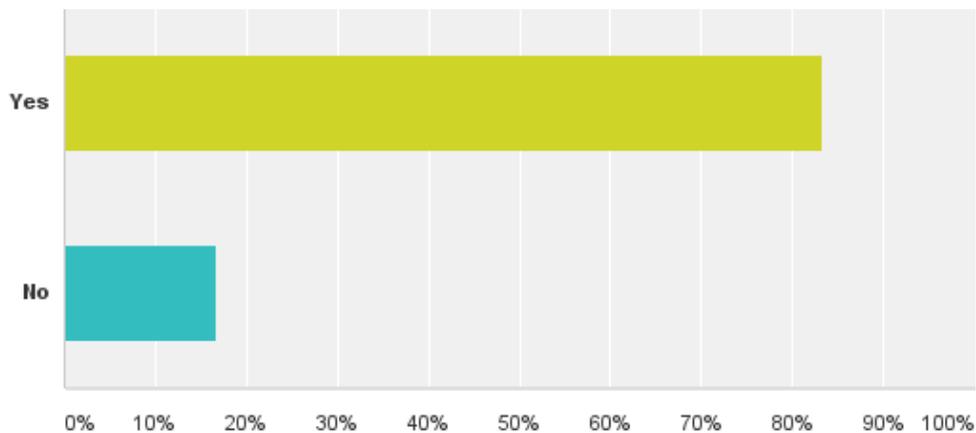
How much difference did having a computer and Internet at home have on your employment situation? Please choose the response that fits best for you:



Did you find it necessary to have a computer and Internet service to be more successful in Build Wealth's Family Stabilization Plan?



Did the program help you manage your income (personal finances, succeed in Build Wealth program goals)?



Feedback was also collected from eight participants during a focus group in September 2014

Frustrations:

- Internet service incredibly slow, particularly in dense areas like the Camden neighborhood
- Enforce 'No kids allowed' policy in trainings. Behavior could be distracting. Child care offered?
- One issue with the Northstar assessments is that participants are not able to go back and see correct answers for those questions they got incorrect. They need to be able to see what they did wrong in order to learn and improve their skills – constructive criticism.

Class culture & objectives:

- Adja's (digital literacy instructor) mission was to build sustainable learning/create independent learners – participants who are confident enough to find information out for themselves and/or troubleshoot if no one else is around
- 'Learn until you learn.'
- 'We want just a class who's a family. Real community.'
- Important for people to feel welcome in class regardless of age, race, etc. and that they don't feel bad if they get something wrong

Ideas for the future:

- Attendees voiced they would like to know more about what to expect from the computers before getting them (updates & error messages that pop up, etc.). Perhaps have someone come in and talk about the hardware, expectations, and how to troubleshoot. During distribution, some of the participants were so excited that it was difficult to listen.
- Along the same lines, continuous education would be helpful since technology is always changing. Refresher modules for existing alumni, tutoring, and more advanced programs.
- Suggested that it would be nice if a tech came out to the houses to check connections and make things functional and then provide follow-up visits
- Suggested to incorporate 'Budget Your Dreams' into curriculum & possibly make it more kid-friendly
- Idea was brought up to have former students come back as paid interns/Instructor Assistants to help out with existing classes. Not only would they be able to add that experience to their resume, but it could also be encouraging for current students to have them in the room.
- Similarly, attendees voiced that it would be encouraging to have people who've found success with the program come in early on and tell their own success stories (i.e. finding a job, kids working on homework, etc.)
- Offer a 'play' class where people can just explore on the computer without being fearful. Independent experimentation is a great way to learn.
- A way for participants to upgrade equipment?



Digital Divide Documentary Empowerment Project

Digital Equity Program



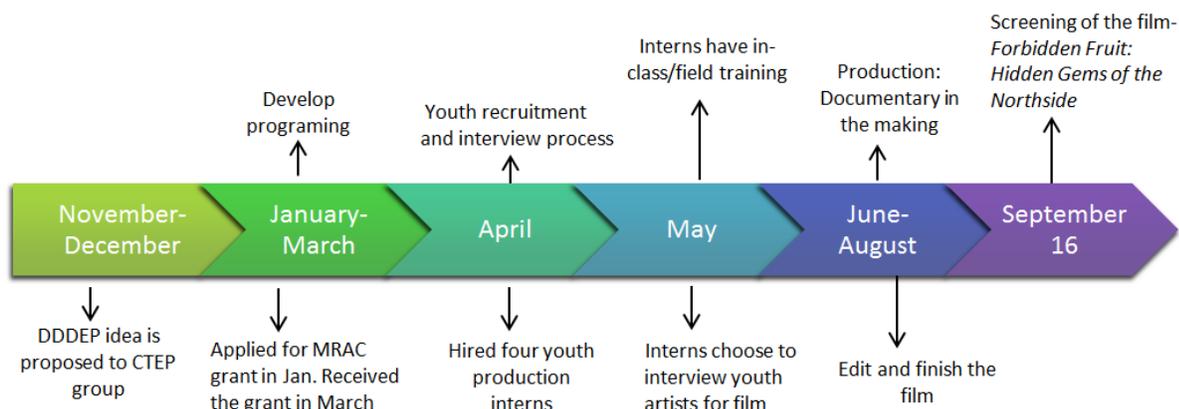
Program Overview

The DDDEP is a documentary film initiative started by Adja Gildersleve and five other CTEP AmeriCorps members. With a mission to empower the voices of North Minneapolis, the project hired four youth production interns to create an artistic and professionally mastered documentary that explores systemic issues and barriers to racial equity in Twin Cities.

The Digital Divide Documentary Empowerment Project highlights and components are:

- **In class training:** Between May 2014-August 2014 the youth production interns participated in 25 hours of classroom training. Curriculum included: Video production training, email, Google Drive and Docs, and Adobe Premiere.
- **Field training:** The interns spent 50 hours practicing what they learned in the classroom out in the field.
- **The Film/Screening:** Forbidden Fruit: Hidden Gems of the Northside is a product of the project. The film challenges dominant media narratives about North Minneapolis. The film screened for a packed house at the Capri Theater.

Project Timeline



Digital Literacy and Access

As a part of the program, the youth production interns received a refurbished laptop with Microsoft Office Suite. During the inclass training the interns learned to navigate in Google Drive, spreadsheets, email, Premiere CS6, and social media.



Outcomes

- All of the interns successful passed the Northstar Standard assessments
- 3 out of 4 interns expressed that having a laptop increases their achievement in academia
- 1 intern is attending a university and the other 3 are college bound

Youth Production Intern Evaluation

What skills have you gained?

"I have gained numerous skills such as how to use the camera in order to give it the effect I want. I have also learned how to communicate better considering that we had to communicate with Adja and with interviewees. I learned more about interview questions and how to conduct an interview. I learned about different camera angles and different narratives. I have a lot of new relationships that I will cherish and also I have gained a wonderful experience. How often do you get to say: I have made a documentary, a professional one at that premiered at the Capri Theater."

"I've gained more defined skills in audio production using the programs FL Studio, Ableton, and Reason. I also learned how to use Adobe Premiere Pro for editing film, and how to use most, if not all, of the equipment used in filmmaking. Plus, I know how to make a documentary now."

"I've gained interviewing skills, networking skills, I've learned how to edit videos using adobe premier, I learned how to film, and use all of the video and audio production equipment correctly."

"I've gained technology skills and met some new friends and I could use this as a career."



WorkForce Center (North) Digital Equity Program

Program Overview

The WorkForce Center is based around promoting business recruitment, expansion, and retention; international trade; workforce development; and community development. Digital literacy is a component that was added with the direct service of the CTEP AmeriCorps Member. The Digital Equity Program at the WorkForce Center took place between July 28, 2014- August 28, 2014. The group consisted of five participants.



Project Timeline

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Program Development/Recruitment | June 2014 |
| Kick off | July 28, 2014 |
| Basic Computer Classes | July 28- August 25, 2014 |
| Distribution | August 25, 2014 |
| Check-in | November 2014 |

Digital Literacy and Access

Classes:

- Computer Basics
- Internet Basics
- Email
- Computer Maintenance and Safety

Outcomes

- All of the participants passed four Northside Digital Literacy assessments
- One of the participants could not use the Clear internet that was provided because service was not available at her address.

Participant Feedback

“This opportunity has allowed me to be independent when job searching and being online. I can do things that I never thought I would accomplish.”

– Rita

“The computer classes have taught me a lot of skills that I will be able to carry with me into the workforce. I’m very grateful for the opportunity”

-Diane

Program Budgets – North Minneapolis

Build Wealth Minnesota

| Item | Cost | Quantity | Price |
|--------------------------------------|------|----------|----------------------|
| Desktop Computers | \$50 | 15 | \$750 |
| Internet Device/Service for 6 months | \$80 | 15 | \$1200 |
| | | | Total: \$1950 |

WorkForce Center

| Item | Cost | Quantity | Price |
|--------------------------------------|------|----------|---------------------|
| Desktop Computers | \$50 | 5 | \$250 |
| Internet Device/service for 6 months | \$80 | 5 | \$400 |
| | | | Total: \$650 |

DDDEP

| Item | Cost | Quantity | Total |
|---|-------|----------|--------------------|
| Newer Laptop Computer with Microsoft Office | \$250 | 4 | Total \$900 |

Compilation of outcomes for South Minneapolis programs is still in progress. In the meantime, please contact Elise Ebhardt, 612-673-2026 with any questions.

Appendix – Unisys Sponsorship Story, June 2014

Private Partnership Advances City's Goals for Digital Equity

The City of Minneapolis is halfway through achieving its 2014 goal of providing home-based digital access for 40 Minneapolis families, with an additional 10 families receiving support later this spring. As part of the City's Digital Equity Program, the families receive refurbished desktop or laptop computers, word processing, spreadsheet, email applications, Internet access, and a full wraparound support program including certified training on how to use the programs, along with individual coaching to support personal objectives. This goal was achieved by a \$6,400 donation from Unisys Corporation, as part of their continued support of the Minneapolis community and its digital needs.

The core challenge in developing literacy is access to a computer and its programs and training in using the tools. In today's world, digital literacy is quickly becoming a requirement for basic necessities: from the ability to apply for a job (most employers no longer use paper applications), to entry-level employment requirements, to accessing educational options and finding appropriate health care. Individuals who need these services are frequently limited by a public facility's capacity, hours of operation, location, and availability. Personal devices, such as smart phones, are not a realistic alternative as they do not offer the same digital enablement. Although such devices are often used as consumer devices for locating information, using social media and purchasing goods, they do not provide the usability necessary for more complex tasks such as completing electronic forms and performing academic research and homework. The Digital Equity program is one viable solution as it promotes a holistic approach to using technology as an avenue to professional growth, increased education, and personal management.

Private partnership support has been instrumental in increasing the availability of home based computers. In 2012, the City developed a Digital Equity pilot program in partnership with BuildWealth Minnesota, a 501(c)3 non-profit agency focused on strengthening underserved communities by empowering families. In 2012, the program distributed 10 computers to families. In November of 2013, Unisys Corporation donated \$6,400 to the City's partner PCs for People to expand the program to provide 40 computers and six months of Internet access for 2014. A local AmeriCorps program called the Community Technology Empowerment Project, and Pillsbury United Communities – Waite House, are the partners providing the digital literacy training needed to connect participants with employment opportunities. These partners also provide the personalized computer support that is one of the cornerstones of the Digital Equity program's integrated approach. BuildWealth Executive Director David McGee credits Unisys with having "started the flame" for the momentum the City is currently experiencing in providing comprehensive digital services to Minneapolis families.

PCs for People, also a 501(c)3 organization, works to improve digital inclusion by eliminating the number of individuals without a computer or Internet access. As a long-time partner with PCs for People, Unisys Corporation and the City of Minneapolis have donated 1,900 devices that include 1,477 desktop computers and 367 laptops. The equipment is owned by Unisys Corporation but donated to PCs for People on behalf of the City. Unisys provides secure clean-up of the devices at no cost to the City, so City personnel can trust that when the equipment leaves City premises, no data remains on the hard drives.

Unisys Corporation is honored to play a key role in this partnership and help the same community for which many of its employees live and work. As an IT company, one of Unisys' core values is to educate the next generation of technology experts and empower its future employees to explore, learn, and succeed. As James Collins, vice president of Unisys Corporation states: "We want to invest in our future technology leaders now, to help prepare them for the challenges they will face in the years ahead."

Investing in the future employees is a need echoed by many of Unisys community service partners. Little Earth United Tribes is a new partner with the Digital Equity program and will soon provide technology in homes throughout its community. Bill Ziegler, executive director of Little Earth, encourages other corporations to invest in today's youth as digital literacy benefits the individual, the family and the community.

City officials couldn't agree more. The City's CIO, Otto Doll, says that partnerships across sectors on digital equity is essential for success. The City's IT vision is for every household in Minneapolis to have a computer with Internet access, for all residents to be digitally literate, and for all residents to see that being a part of the digital society is vital to their well-being. "We can't do this alone. The value of our program is in the collaboration - we can tailor the program to meet specific interests and needs in the community. Having the private sector involved demonstrates the business community's commitment to digital equity and the importance of increasing technology skills in Minneapolis. The partnerships also provide the program participants with a direct connection to employers, which is particularly important in the IT industry as the demand for IT professionals continues to grow."

Unisys relationship with PCs for People began in 2009, when Unisys and the City was searching for an alternative to recycling hardware and devices as part of their end of life technology refreshes. PCs for People provided a "responsible recycling" program by not only offering complete and secure recycling services, but also the added benefit of donating refurbished computers to residents of the community. Both Unisys and PCs for People characterize their relationship as a "great partnership" and commend the personnel of each for their mutual cooperation in turning a necessary service into a community benefit.

The Digital Equity program was created to address technology access and digital literacy gaps identified by the Minneapolis Community Technology survey – a comprehensive annual study of Minneapolis residents' access to and use of computers, mobile devices and the Internet. Through the Digital Equity program, participants receive a computer, office software, anti-virus/anti-malware programs and free Internet access for six months. In addition, they must complete a formal training program that certifies they know how to operate the desktop, relevant applications and can safely navigate the Internet. Participants have used the technology to research such topics as employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, healthcare options, and home mortgage financing. When packaged together, this knowledge translates to crucial skills that often lead to a positive transformation. The ability to apply for a job, learn new professional skills and help one's child with their homework is not only powerful, it's life-changing.

Impact statements from 2012 Digital Equity program participants:

How did having computer training and access to a computer and the Internet at home impact your employment situation?

- *Helped me get the job I start on Monday*
- *Got me a job I really needed*
- *Before taking the classes, I had to have my 8 year old help me. I don't have to depend on him now.*
- *I'm starting my own business – it helps with the finances*
- *Improved my knowledge base for my job*
- *The training showed me where to go for jobs online and how to do applications*
- *Provided more options on where to find work, and made it much easier to contact employers.*
- *I learned computer skills for employment and got help with the Social Security website*
- *I learned about how computers work, and the options so I can address an issue myself*

The City is seeking additional partnerships to expand the Digital Equity program so all residents can participate in the benefits of the digital society. For more information and to get involved contact Elise.Ebhardt@minneapolismn.gov, 612-673-2026 or visit the City of Minneapolis Digital Inclusion website at www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion